

'PC Librarian' handles disk clutter

Like clutter in your closet that needs to be periodically tossed in a garbage can, hard disk clutter — old letters, spreadsheets and memos stored on your personal computer — should either be deleted or archived to floppies.

Now a new program, PC Librarian from United Software Security Inc. of Vienna, Va., for \$69 can help keep track of hundreds or thousands of unused, old files.

The program is actually an archiving, retrieving and cataloging system for file storage on media other than a hard disk. Surprisingly, it's simple to use.

Here are some of the features it offers:

- It allows you to tag files that you wish to archive on floppy disks. It then creates a catalog that helps you keep track of where the files are stored. Finally, with a single stroke, the selected files are deleted from your hard disk, creating all the new space you need for new programs and data.

- It helps you preserve differ-



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ent versions of files. Any project that undergoes constant revisions will, sooner or later, need access to earlier drafts. The program tracks each version and makes retrieving any older version a snap.

- While copying files to floppies, the program provides an optional compressing and encrypting feature.

Compression saves space on the storage media — at the sacrifice of longer transfer time. Sensitive files can also be encrypted when they're archived. An optional password feature guards access to the PC Librarian program.

Running PC Librarian, I noticed a lot of similarities to using a backup program such as Fastback Plus, from Fifth Generation Sys-

tems Inc. of Baton Rouge, La., for \$189. Fastback Plus, like PC Librarian, copies files from hard disks to various media with or without compression; allows for selective inclusion of files based on names, directories or dates; and generates a catalog of files copied.

However, PC Librarian offers additional features to aid archiving and retrieving of files. While Fastback Plus creates a separate catalog for each backup session, PC Librarian maintains a single catalog reflecting the combined activity in all archiving sessions.

This powerful feature is essential for the quick retrieval of specific files from stacks of backup floppies.

In addition to sorting by name, date and size, files in the catalog can be searched and sorted by individual archiving sessions or by specific floppy disks.

There are further important differences between PC Librarian and a backup program like Fastback Plus: PC Librarian allows de-

scriptive notes to be attached to files as catalog entries.

On the downside, it's certainly faster to simply delete files that you no longer use, thus saving not only the cost of the program, but your time and effort to use it.

- The Bottom Line: Unused files shouldn't loiter on your valuable hard disk real estate. An archiving system like PC Librarian brings speed and order to the file maintenance process. While it has some resemblance to a backup utility, it adds features that encourage the transfer of files back and forth from hard disk to floppies.

But be sure you need it. It's far easier to simply delete old files without archiving if you can get away with it.

Hillel Segal's column includes evaluations of gadgets, seminars and books designed to enhance business productivity. Segal is a management consultant based in Boulder.